

Hezekiah Smith and Baptist Foundations in the Colonial and Federal Periods

by

Erik DiVietro

© 2015

CONTENTS

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Contents | i |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Early Ministry | 1 |
| South Carolina..... | 2 |
| New England | 3 |
| Ministry on the Frontiers | 4 |
| Rhode Island College..... | 6 |
| Patriotism and Chaplaincy | 8 |
| The Fight for Religious Freedom..... | 9 |
| A Note on Smith's Personal Life..... | 11 |
| Conclusion..... | 12 |
| Bibliography | 13 |

INTRODUCTION

In the late 18th century, the Baptists emerged as one of the most vocal religious groups in the American colonies. Despite often being targeted by the religious institutions of New England, Baptists grew exponentially in the wake of the First Great Awakening. Religious tolerance was long coming in New England, and there was good reason for state-sponsored churches like the Congregationalists in Massachusetts to be unwilling to offer tolerance to dissidents. When it did come, it was thanks to the efforts of a few extraordinary men who were providentially prepared for the task and met it intelligently and diligently.

One of these men was Hezekiah Smith, the first pastor of the First Baptist Church in Haverhill, Massachusetts.¹ Smith not only made significant contributions to the unity and education of Baptists in colonial New England. He also advanced the cause of religious liberty in the burgeoning United States both through active preaching and personal influence. He counted among his friends the most influential Baptist leaders of his day as well as a number of powerful politicians who contributed to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, particularly in the area of religious freedom. Although far from the only influences upon the religious and national identity of the early United States, the Baptists were major contributors in New England and in Virginia.

Smith was an outlier, an extraordinary individual at an extraordinary time. As will be demonstrated in this paper, he was far from average. His life serves as an exemplar, not in the particulars but in the broader concepts of how a minister can serve a community and thereby help in transforming it.

EARLY MINISTRY

Tho' the People applauded the Discourse, I did not see much Appearance of Good done. And I had to ask Forgiveness for doing any Thing, that would Cause God to withhold the quickening Influence of his Spirit.²

This was how a twenty-four year old Hezekiah Smith described a message he preached from Revelation 13:13-15 on November 8, 1762, at the home of John Briton just across the Delaware

¹ Pronounced *hā-ver-’l* by New Englanders, not *hav-er-hill*.

² Hezekiah Smith, “Journals” I, 3, in John David Broome, *The life, ministry and journals of Hezekiah Smith: pastor of the First Baptist Church of Haverhill, Massachusetts 1765 to 1805 and chaplain in the American Revolution 1775 to 1780* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2004). Henceforth, this source will be noted as simply “Journals” with the appropriate volume and page number.

from Kingwood, New Jersey. A recent graduate of the Princeton College,³ Smith was consumed with preaching the gospel at every opportunity. That week, he preached at least once every day.

Born in 1737 on Long Island, Smith was raised in New Jersey by pious parents. What little information that is available about his childhood comes from the sermon preached at his funeral in 1805 by Samuel Stillman and the recollections of his granddaughter Mary Smith, which were provided to William B. Sprague in the mid-1860's. As Mary's husband Samuel F. Smith wrote, "He left no continuous nor even fragmentary record of his life, out of which his biography could be framed, nor would he ever permit a painter to delineate his features on canvass."⁴

As a young man Smith became a member of John Gano's prominent Baptist church in New York. Only ten years older than Smith, Gano became a lifelong friend and mentor. He suggested that Smith receive an education as preparation for the ministry. Smith attended the Hopewell Academy, the first Baptist institution in the colonies.⁵ Smith and a number of his classmates, among them another lifelong friend James Manning, went next to Princeton College in New Jersey because there was not yet a Baptist college in the colonies, and Princeton embodied the New Light's spirit of cooperation and evangelistic fervor. Smith graduated in 1762 alongside his friend Manning who was the salutictorian of their class.⁶

SOUTH CAROLINA

Smith's extant journals begin the autumn after he graduated, and they reveal a young man devoted chiefly to itinerant preaching. The Hopewell Church had licensed him to preach, and he availed himself of every opportunity.⁷ He spent November and December, 1762, working his

³ When it was founded in 1746, Princeton was officially the College of New Jersey, although it was commonly called Princeton or Prince Town by Smith's time. The school's name was not changed until 1896, but it will be referred to as Princeton here.

⁴ Samuel F. Smith, "Hezekiah Smith, D.D." in *Annals of the American Pulpit: or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of Various Denominations from the Early Settlement of the Country to the Close of the Year Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-five with Historical Introductions*, vol. 6, ed. William B. Sprague (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1865), 97.

⁵ Janet Moore Lindman, *Bodies of Belief: Baptist Community in Early America* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 164.

⁶ Reuben Aldridge Guild, *Life, Times, and Correspondence of James Manning, and the Early History of Brown University* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1864), 33.

⁷ John David Broome, "Hezekiah Smith of Haverhill," *Baptist History and Heritage* 1.1 (1965): 8.

way to the Carolinas via Maryland and Virginia, despite difficulties of his own making.⁸ In February, 1763, Smith arrived in Charleston and met Oliver Hart, the pastor of the Charleston Church and leader of the Charleston Association.⁹ Smith spent the next year preaching through anywhere he could find a hearing, and on Tuesday, September 20, 1763, he was ordained to the ministry by a council consisting of Hart and three other pastors. He ministered in the South until February, 1764, when he sailed back to New York and there met up with Gano.¹⁰

NEW ENGLAND

In Morristown, New Jersey, Smith met up with Manning, and the two friends embarked for Rhode Island in April.¹¹ Manning settled in Rhode Island and began the work of establishing what would eventually become the Rhode Island College (later Brown University), but Smith was restless. Probably financed by Manning's backers,¹² Smith traveled throughout New England and then back to New Jersey before being asked to fill the pulpit of the West Parish Church in Haverhill, Massachusetts. From September, 1764, to May, 1765, Smith preached to swelling crowds, baptizing laymen and clergy alike.¹³ The Congregationalists organized opposition, which Smith met with characteristic aplomb.¹⁴

To his supporters, Smith was a "second Whitfield" and his popularity continued to rise.¹⁵ On May 9, 1765, Smith and a group of dissenters from Haverhill and the surrounding towns covenanted to form a new Baptist congregation.¹⁶ The following November 12, Gano, Spillman and Manning were present when they called Smith as pastor, an office he would hold for forty years.¹⁷ Twenty years later, the congregation grew to 199 members, making it the largest

⁸ Smith, "Journals," I, 4–14. He lost his horse twice in the first two weeks of traveling.

⁹ Smith, "Journals," I, 21–23.

¹⁰ Smith, "Journals," I, 43–44; 56.

¹¹ Smith, "Journals," I, 62.

¹² John David Broome, *The Life, Ministry and Journals of Hezekiah Smith: Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Haverhill, Massachusetts 1765 To 1805 and Chaplain in the American Revolution 1775 To 1780* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2004), 61.

¹³ Smith, "Journals," II, 35; III, 22

¹⁴ Hezekiah Smith, *The Doctrine of Believer's Baptism By Immersion Only: Asserted and Maintained Against the Attempts of Mr. Jonathan Parsons, A.M. to invalidate it, in two sermons preached at Haverhill West-Parish, Lord's Day April the 28th, 1765, and since published* (Boston, MA: Philip Freeman, 1776).

¹⁵ Broome, "Hezekiah Smith of Haverhill," 9.

¹⁶ Smith, "Journals," III, 25–26.

¹⁷ Broome, "Hezekiah Smith of Haverhill," 9.

congregation in the Warren Association and the fifth largest in all of New England.¹⁸

MINISTRY ON THE FRONTIERS

Having a church in Haverhill did not stop Smith from traveling. Through his travels, he had met Isaac Backus, the Baptist pastor in Middletown, Massachusetts, and renewed a friendship with a classmate, Samuel Stillman, who was the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Boston. Years later, Backus reported that at the time Smith arrived in New England, there were only fifty Baptist churches in the region, and almost all of them were south of Boston.¹⁹ The relatively small number of trained ministers, the rapidly growing population and the largely rural environment outside of Boston all but required it.²⁰ By 1776, the number of Baptist churches in the region had doubled.²¹ By 1794, there were nearly 300.²² Smith, Backus, Stillman, Manning and a few others were the vanguard of Baptist expansion in New England,²³ but of them, Smith was the “son of thunder.”²⁴ Even the poet John Greenleaf Whittier remarked, “few excelled him as a preacher.”²⁵

When Eliphalet Smith, the Congregationalist pastor in Deerfield, New Hampshire, wrote to Manning asking for someone to baptize him and his congregation, it was Hezekiah Smith who came.²⁶ This happened all over New England, and not only were whole churches converted, but

¹⁸ Isaac Backus, *History of New England with Particular Reference to the Denomination of Christians Called Baptists*, vol. 2 (Providence, RI: Providence Press Company, 1871), 309–310; Broome, *The Life, Ministry and Journals*, 71.

¹⁹ Backus, *History of New England*, 306–310.

²⁰ Backus, *History of New England*, 480.

²¹ Roger Finke and Rodney Starke, *Churching of America 1776-1990* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 277-278.

²² John Asplund, “The Universal Register of the Baptist Denomination in North America for the Years 1790, 1791, 1792, 1793, and Part of 1794” in *An Anthology of Early Baptists in New Hampshire*, ed. Terry Wolever (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2001), 142. Other early sources give the total Baptist population of New England as over 17,000. See William Bathelder, *A Discourse Delivered in Haverhill, July 1816, on a Baptismal Occasion*, 2nd ed. (Exeter, NH: Samuel T. Moses, 1823), 18.

²³ C. C. Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740-1800: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 243; Alvah Hovey, *A Memoir of the Life and Times of the Rev. Isaac Backus* (Boston, MA: Gould and Lincoln, 1859), 153, 325.

²⁴ Guild, *Life, Times and Correspondence*, 181.

²⁵ Benjamin L. Mirick, *The History of Haverhill, Massachusetts* (Haverhill, MA: A. W. Thayer, 1832), 191.

²⁶ Ebenezer E. Cummings, “A Sermon, Preached Before the New Hampshire Baptist State Convention at Its Tenth Annual Meeting, Held at Deerfield, October 20, 1835” in *An Anthology of Early Baptists in New Hampshire*

settled Baptists like Samuel Shepard converted under Smith's preaching and shortly afterward relocated (in Shepard's case to Brentwood, New Hampshire) to begin churches of their own.²⁷

An average year saw Smith preaching over 150 sermons in well over thirty locations outside of Haverhill.²⁸ Smith was "the first Baptist preacher to be seen by many of the inhabitants of northeastern New England. In fact, he was likely the first Baptist preacher to preach in Maine in over sixty years."²⁹ His personal ministry extended to Berwick and Gorham, Maine, and some of his converts like Eliphalet Smith, went even further into the wilderness.³⁰ At the age of sixty, Smith could still be found riding his horse deep into the New Hampshire woods to Coos County.³¹

Smith ministered through a period of pacification and settlement. In the 1760's, northern New England was sparsely populated, but was being settled rapidly. The population of New Hampshire nearly doubled from 1761 to 1773, and Maine almost tripled,³² but the frontier was still very real. James Sullivan, who was at the time Attorney General of Massachusetts, records that what is now the area of Kittery, Maine, near the mouth of the Piscataqua River was abandoned until the mid-1720's. As late as 1754, there were still records of raids by the Wapanaki peoples.³³

As Smith's influence grew, the opposition of the established Congregational Church increased. Isaac Backus records a letter from Martha Kimball that tells a story from 1768, illustrating the difficulties that Smith had when traveling outside of Haverhill:

Rev. Hezekiah Smith was shamefully treated by many of the people in Bradford; who came, headed by the Sheriff, Amos Milliken, at a time when Mr. Smith was to preach a sermon in our house at the request of my husband, and warmly contended with him, and threatened him if he did proceed. However, Mr. Smith went to begin service by singing, notwithstanding the noise, clamor, and threats of the people. But one of their number snatched the chair, behind which Mr. Smith stood, from before him; upon which my husband desired Mr. Smith to tarry a little till he

edited by Terry Wolever (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2001), 13; Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism*, 243.

²⁷ Cummings, "A Sermon," 13; Backus, *History of New England*, vol. 2, 169-170; Guild, *Chaplain Smith*, 135-36.

²⁸ Broome, *Life, Ministry and Journals*, 206.

²⁹ Broome, *Life, Ministry and Journals*, 174.

³⁰ Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism*, 251.

³¹ Guild, *Chaplain Smith*, 248; Broome, *The Life, Ministry and Journals*, 144.

³² W. S. Rossiter, *A Century of Population Growth: From the first to the twelfth census of the United States: 1790-1900* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1909), 4-5.

³³ James Sullivan, *The History of the District of Maine* (Boston, MA: I. Thomas and E.T. Andrews, 1795), 248-52.

*had quelled the tumult; but all his endeavors to silence them were in vain. Upon which my husband desired Mr. Smith to begin public service; which accordingly he did, and went through then without further molestation.*³⁴

Although Smith and the Baptists sought to abide by the demanding laws of tolerance in place in Massachusetts at the time, they were nonetheless the subject of persecution. Beside crowds appearing at their meeting places, the constabulary would often assess ridiculous taxes upon them for being “dissenters.” Such was the case for both Martha Kimball and many like her.³⁵

Usually, the resistance was more passive. Early in his ministry, Smith was welcomed into towns by the Congregationalist ministers, such as in Methuen in August 1764.³⁶ After becoming the pastor in Haverhill, however, it took two years for him to even get permission to preach in Maine. Even then, the pastors like the pastor in Falmouth (present day Portland) refused to share the platform with him. On June 29, 1767, the pastor wrote about Smith, “Burnham urged me to invite Smith to preach, which I refused to do.”³⁷

Through all of this, Smith proved himself a resolute but compassionate man. His journals overflow with records of visits to members and non-members alike. In time, the opposition gave way to respect both inside and outside Baptist circles. The membership of the Haverhill church extended well beyond the town limits, and Smith devotion to caring for those both within and without earned the respect of merchants and ministers alike.³⁸ His influence spread well beyond his own capacity.

RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

To better organize their efforts, a number of Baptist churches including Smith’s in Haverhill and Backus’ in Middleborough, met in Warren, Rhode Island, to affirm the Philadelphia Confession and form an association in 1767. Smith’s church was the first to join and was the largest and most influential church in the association.³⁹ Backus, who represented the older Separatist

³⁴ Backus, *History of New England*, 145.

³⁵ Backus, *History of New England*, 145.

³⁶ Smith, “Journals,” II, 34–35.

³⁷ Henry S. Burrage, *History of the Baptists in Maine* (Portland, ME: Marks Printing House, Printers, 1904), 30.

³⁸ Broome, *Life, Ministry and Journals*, 73–74; 145.

³⁹ Broome, *Life, Ministry and Journals*, 71.

Baptist movement was reluctant but did finally join in 1770.⁴⁰

This Warren Association, as it came to be known, was modeled after the Philadelphia Association and was the earliest such association in New England. The two Associations worked closely together on a shared purpose.⁴¹ The Philadelphia Association had sent Manning to Rhode Island with the express mission to establish a college there.⁴² Once the charter was granted in 1764, he relocated the school to Warren and established what would eventually become Brown University. The fledgling college needed local support if it was going to raise up young men for ministry among the booming population of the Northeast. Backus and Smith had been trustees since the beginning.⁴³ In 1770, Smith, was given “suitable credentials” and sent on a fundraising tour through the South.⁴⁴

*And whereas the said Corporation at their annual meeting at Warren...being well convinced of your affection and regard to the said College or University, and of your integrity and ability, did unanimously appoint and request you to solicit and receive benefactions in any part of America for the benefit of said Institution.*⁴⁵

Smith left for South Carolina on October 2, 1769, and returned eight months later with £2,538 and promises of another £1,200.⁴⁶ This was a substantial amount, despite the fact that South Carolina’s pound was only worth one-fifth a pound sterling. It saved the college, which was in financial peril. Oliver Hart, the pastor of the Charleston Church who had ordained Smith, wrote to Manning: “He [Smith] has met with much opposition, and borne many reflections, but none of these things have discouraged him.”⁴⁷ It was neither the first nor the last time Smith traveled to the South to raise funds for the college, and each trip was profitable.

Manning and Smith maintained a lively correspondence concerning the college. Manning often sent letters to Smith detailing both difficulties and successes.⁴⁸ New England was a growing

⁴⁰ Broome, *Life, Ministry and Journals*, 94-96; H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Publishers, 1987), 243.

⁴¹ Hovey, *Life and Times*, 156.

⁴² Backus, *History of New England*, vol. 2, 137.

⁴³ Hovey, *Life and Times*, 152.

⁴⁴ Reuben Aldridge Guild, *History of Brown University: With Illustrative Documents* (Providence, RI: Providence Press Company, 1867), 229.

⁴⁵ Guild, *History of Brown University*, 212.

⁴⁶ Guild, *History of Brown University*, 215.

⁴⁷ Guild, *History of Brown University*, 220.

⁴⁸ Guild, *History of Brown University*, 196-97.

economy, and Smith's support was vital for the college's survival. When Manning died in 1791, Smith became one of the trustees of the Committee of the Baptist Education Fund and continued his fundraising efforts, both in the region and outside of it.⁴⁹ In 1797, he received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree for his tireless support.⁵⁰

PATRIOTISM AND CHAPLAINCY

Many of Smith's closest friends were loyal to the colonists when it became clear that hostility was going to break out between them and England. The Baptists were well known patriots and many of their number served as chaplains, including Smith.⁵¹ Prior to the war, Smith publicly declared his commitment first to the colonies' cause:

*The Antipaedobaptist churches in New England are most heartily concerned for the preservation and defense of the rights and privileges of this country, and are deeply affected by the encroachments upon the same which have lately been made by the British Parliament, and are willing to unite with our dear country men, vigorously to pursue every prudent measure for relief.*⁵²

When war came, Smith was already serving as chaplain of the local militia.⁵³ Payroll records show him as chaplain to the 5th Regiment under the command of Colonel John Nixon encamped at Winter Hill (Somerville) in September 1775, just a couple of months after the regiment participated in the Battle of Bunker Hill.⁵⁴ New England seems to have been singular in the willingness of ministers to serve as chaplains, something Washington remarked upon to the Continental Congress.⁵⁵

The work was challenging, and Smith wrote to Backus of the sinfulness he encountered in the army camps.⁵⁶ Still, it was invigorating. From Winter Hill, Smith wrote to his wife, "lately I have

⁴⁹ Broome, *Life, Letters and Journals*, 119-121.

⁵⁰ Brooke, "Hezekiah Smith of Haverhill," 12.

⁵¹ Guild, *Life, Times and Correspondence*, 136.

⁵² Hezekiah Smith, "Circular Letter," in *Warren Baptist Association Minutes, 1774, 7-8*, in Broome, *Life, Letters, and Journals*, 127.

⁵³ Mirick, *The History of Haverhill*, 191.

⁵⁴ Secretary of State of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War: A Compilation from the Archives*, vol. 14 (Boston, MA: Wright and Potter Printing Company, 1906), 412; John W. Merriam, "The Military Record of Brigadier General John Nixon of Massachusetts," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 36.1 (1926): 38-39.

⁵⁵ Joel Tyler Headley, *The Chaplains and Clergy of the Revolution* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1864), 61-63.

⁵⁶ Broome, *Life, Ministry and Journals*, 135.

perceived more of the genuine Operations of the Holy Ghost in some individuals, as I apprehend, than I have me with, since I have belonged to the Army.”⁵⁷ He went with the regiment when they evacuated the Boston area in the summer of 1776 and as they fought under Washington in New Jersey and New York. When Col. Nixon was promoted to Brigadier General in 1777, Smith became brigade chaplain.⁵⁸

Smith’s granddaughter recounted stories of a strong friendship between Smith and George Washington during this period, but subsequent research has uncovered no evidence for this.⁵⁹ Although a close friendship is not evident in the extant records, Washington did have tremendous respect for the Baptist clergy, specifically John Gano whom he invited to offer the prayer marking the end of hostilities. Washington attended Smith’s services several times, and the two dined together at least twice during his service.⁶⁰ When Washington died in 1800, Smith delivered the benedictory prayer, so there was clearly some sort of relationship that went beyond mere acquaintance.⁶¹

Smith’s service tempered his perspective on other churches. Opposition seems to have imparted Smith with a fiery attitude toward the established Presbyterians and Congregationalists churches. In a 1773 letter, Manning made Smith’s attitude the butt of a joke. Manning labeled Smith attitude as “brandishing weapons, take the field of Mars like an old veteran that scorns to let his sword rust.”⁶² During his period of service, he found himself in close proximity with ministers of other faiths. His journal reveals that he often utilized the meetinghouses of Presbyterian and Congregationalist, showing a remarkable change in thought. Although fiercely defensive of Baptist doctrine, Smith worked for the betterment of the situation of all.

THE FIGHT FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

In both 1799 and 1800, Smith’s congregation petitioned for his discharge from duty. In 1781

⁵⁷ Broome, *Life, Ministry and Journals*, 435.

⁵⁸ Broome, *Life, ministry and Journals*, 436-437; *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors*, 39.

⁵⁹ One of the difficulties in dealing with the veracity of Mary Smith’s claim is that Washington’s journals for 1780-1781, the period when he would have met Smith, are missing. The absence of any other reference in either men’s writings, especially on the two occasions when they were in the same location, argues against Mary’s belief.

⁶⁰ Smith, “Journals,” VIII, 20.

⁶¹ Smith, “Journals,” VIII, 4.

⁶² Guild, *Life, Times and Correspondence*, 209. There is no evidence that Smith was nearly as hostile as Manning indicates and Manning is clearly joking in his letter – as he often did at his friend’s expense; but there may have been a seed of truth as well.

with the armies moving south, Washington discharged him.⁶³ While had he been away, Massachusetts had adopted a constitution that included an article detailing the government's involvement in religious affairs. The content of this article was deeply troubling for many in the Warren Association, which had been fighting for religious freedom since 1768. They took out articles in the Boston newspapers in 1770. At one point Smith was even commissioned to go to England as "Chosen Agent for the Baptists to go to England with a Petition to our King to seek Redress from Oppression in Matters of Religion," a move that at least one scholar believes may have been impulsive.⁶⁴ Smith never went, although he and the Warren Association continued to fight for freedom. Smith and the other Baptists preached often on the matter and dispatched letters to anyone they thought would help the cause.

In 1793, after decades of fighting and after the ratification of the federal constitution, Smith's congregation incorporated under the Massachusetts law.⁶⁵ Backus perceived it as a compromise, but Smith believed this was a necessary step to further the fight for full religious freedom in the state. Backus did not agree, but Smith believed he needed to abide by the law in order to continue effective ministry. At least one writer attributes a role second only to Backus in Massachusetts' fight for religious freedom.⁶⁶ Neither man lived to see religious freedom granted in Massachusetts in 1833.

Smith was not as actively involved in the fight for religious freedom on the national level, but his friends and associates were. At least one member of Smith's church, Joseph Haynes, was a serving in the Continental Congress before the Revolutionary War. In 1774, Smith urged the Warren Association to send a delegation to the Continental Congress. He helped draft the letter the commissioners carried.⁶⁷ In 1786, James Manning served in Congress under the Articles of Confederation and joined the Grand Commission alongside others who eventually called for a new Constitutional Convention. When the Constitution was brought to Massachusetts for ratification, the Baptist segment of the population resisted it because it lacked any explicit statement of religious freedom.

Fisher Ames—a congressman from Dedham, Massachusetts, a friend of Smith's and possibly a member of his church—arranged a compromise with the Baptists and others concerned with

⁶³ Broome, *Life, Letters and Journals*, 140.

⁶⁴ Broome, *Life, Ministry and Journals*, 116–17; 370.

⁶⁵ Broome, *Life, Ministry and Journals*, 118.

⁶⁶ W. H. Allison, "Hezekiah Smith," *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. 16, ed. Dumas Malone (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1935), 279.

⁶⁷ Broome, *Life, Letters and Journals*, 118.

the Constitution.⁶⁸ He proposed that if the states ratified the Constitution, then Congress would provide a Bill of Rights in the form of amendments to the Constitution. Ames was also instrumental in the approval of James' Madison' verbiage of the the Establishment Clause in the First Amendment.⁶⁹

The irony that Massachusetts guaranteed the religious freedom on the federal level while prohibiting it in their own Constitution would not have been lost on the Baptists. Still, their influence among the population far outstripped that of the Congregationalists, and this was evidenced in the continual involvement of Massachusetts representatives in the acts that constituted the federal freedom of religion. Isaac Backus is often given credit for most of the work done for religious freedom, but Smith was the tireless evangelist who had laid the groundwork by preaching to thousands and seeing them come to Christ. The partnership he shared with his more politically involved friends was a perfect symbiosis that led to radical changes of the makeup of New England.

A NOTE ON SMITH'S PERSONAL LIFE

There is a curious postscript to Hezekiah Smith's life and ministry. Until 1771, he lived and worked as an unattached bachelor. Then, he encountered a young woman from Boxford, Hepzibah Kimball. Their courtship must have been an interesting one. They met in November 1771, were engaged in April of the following year and married in June.⁷⁰ "Hepsy" was never a member of any church,⁷¹ and years later he was still asking her to "honor Jesus with the gift of her heart."⁷² Although the Smiths seem to have made a happy home and raised six children, Hepzibah did not share Hezekiah's passion for the Lord or for traveling. She appears not to have left their home in Haverhill, content to live her days occupied with domestic affairs while her husband ranged over the colonies first as an itinerant preacher and later as a chaplain with the Continental Army. They had four children together, and by all accounts were quite happy together despite the difference of religious opinions.

⁶⁸ Smith, "Journals," V, 59. No record of Ames' membership could be found, but Smith generally stayed at the homes of members when traveling, so his visits *might* indicate that Ames' family had joined Smith's church.

⁶⁹ Congressional Research Service, "U.S. Constitution Annotated," Cornell University Law School Legal Information Institution, https://www.law.cornell.edu/anncon/html/amdt1afrag1_user.html.

⁷⁰ Topsfield Historical Society, *Vital Records of Haverhill, Massachusetts to the End of the Year 1849: Volume II. – Marriages and Deaths* (Salem, MA: Newcomb & Gauss, Printers, 1911), 292.

⁷¹ Guild, *Chaplain Smith*, 148; *Life, Times and Correspondence*, 136.

⁷² Broome, *Life, Ministry and Journals*, 98.

CONCLUSION

Smith's life was consumed by the passion of his mission, and yet he was not so passionate that he forgot compassion or tenderness. He was a faithful caregiver to his community all of his days, and he was a devoted husband to a wife who did not share his beliefs. A patriot who did his duty for the nation while preaching the gospel to the assembled brigades, he was a strong supporter of religious freedom and yet submitted to the laws of incorporation and abided by them when his grievances were rejected. Hezekiah Smith lived his life with resolve and understanding, which was difficult in the times he lived through.

When he died in 1805, Smith had been the pastor of First Baptist Church of Haverhill for just over forty years. His itinerant ministry had taken him virtually everywhere in the colonies and the men he baptized and mentored had extended even further. Perhaps nothing says more about his life than that his funeral sparked a revival and one of the people transformed by it was Ann Hasseltine, the future wife of Adoniram Judson.⁷³

His name rarely appears in history books today, and yet he was part of a small group of Baptist ministers who can be said to have helped form the American identity as it existed at the end of the war. He was actively involved in the establishment of far more than just churches. As one of the foremost Baptists in New England during the late Colonial and early Federal periods, it is not an overstatement to say that Smith contributed significantly to the religious, communal and political identity of the United States. He modeled a mission-oriented church planting form of ministry. He encouraged education and community involvement. He participated in the development of representative government and advocated for the freedom of religion.

⁷³ Broome, "Hezekiah Smith of Haverhill," 13–14.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allison, W. H. "Hezekiah Smith." *Dictionary of American Biography*, Vol. XVI. Edited by Dumas Malone. New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1935.
- Backus, Isaac. *History of New England with Particular Reference to the Denomination of Christians Called Baptists*. Vol. 2. Providence, RI: Providence Press Company, 1871.
- Broome, John David. "Hezekiah Smith of Haverhill." *Baptist History And Heritage* 1, no. 1 (August 1965): 8-14.
- _____. *The life, ministry and journals of Hezekiah Smith: pastor of the First Baptist Church of Haverhill, Massachusetts 1765 to 1805 and chaplain in the American Revolution 1775 to 1780*. Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2004.
- Burrage, Henry S. *History of the Baptists in Maine*. Portland, ME: Marks Printing House, Printers, 1904.
- Congressional Research Service. "U.S. Constitution Annotated." Cornell University Law School Legal Information Institution. Accessed June 15, 2015.
https://www.law.cornell.edu/anncon/html/amdt1afrag1_user.html.
- Finke, Roger and Rodney Starke. *Churching of America 1776-1990*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992.
- Goen, C. C. *Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740- 1800: Strict Congregationalists and Separatist Baptists in the Great Awakening*. Scranton, PA: Wesleyan University Press, 1987.
- Guild, Reuben Aldridge, ed. *Chaplain Smith and the Baptists; or Life, Journals, Letters and Addresses, of the Rev. Hezekiah Smith, D.D., of Haverhill, Mass., 1737-1805*. Philadelphia, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1885.
- _____. *History of Brown University: With Illustrative Documents*. Providence, RI: Providence Press Company, 1867.
- _____. *Life, Times, and Correspondence of James Manning, and the Early History of Brown University*. Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1864.
- Harper, Keith, Sean Lucas and Paul Harvey. *Religion and American Culture: American Denominational History: Perspectives on the Past, Prospects for the Future*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2008.
- Headley, Joel Tyler. *The Chaplains and Clergy of the Revolution*. New York: Charles Scribner, 1864.

- Hovey, Alvah. *A Memoir of the Life and Times of the Rev. Isaac Backus*. Boston, MA: Gould and Lincoln, 1859.
- Lindman, Janet Moore. *Bodies of Belief: Baptist Community in Early America*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.
- McBeth, H. Leon. *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Publishers, 1987.
- Merriam, John W. "The Military Record of Brigadier General John Nixon of Massachusetts." *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 36, No. 1 (April 1926): 38-70. Accessed May 21, 2015. <http://www.americanantiquarian.org/proceedings/44806750.pdf>
- Mirick, Benjamin L. *The History of Haverhill, Massachusetts*. Haverhill, MA: A. W. Thayer, 1832.
- Rossiter, W. S. *A Century of Population Growth: From the first to the twelfth census of the United States: 1790-1900*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1909.
- Sprague, William B. *Annals of the American Pulpit: or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of Various Denominations from the Early Settlement of the Country to the Close of the Year Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-five with Historical Introductions*. Vol. 6. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1865.
- Sullivan, James. *The History of the District of Maine*. Boston, MA: I. Thomas and E.T. Andrews, 1795.
- Topsfield Historical Society. *Vital Records of Haverhill, Massachusetts to the End of the Year 1849: Volume II. – Marriages and Deaths*. Salem, MA: Newcomb & Gauss, Printers, 1911.
- Williams, Michael E. "The Influence of Calvinism on Colonial Baptists." *Baptist History and Heritage* 39, No. 2 (Spring 2004): 26-39.
- Wolever, Terry, ed. *An Anthology of Early Baptists in New Hampshire*. Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2001.